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 (“Land of the Morning Calm”)

Roughly the size of the state of Indiana, Korea has two major cities, Seoul in the northern part of the country, and Pusan on the southern coast. CNFK is located in Seoul, a bustling city with a population of 12 million. When combined with neighboring cities, the metropolitan area is home to almost 20 million people, making

"I've even been scuba diving in the shark tank in the Pusan Aquarium. A total blast! I've done some traveling across the peninsula so far and am impressed with the culture, sense of history, availability of natural settings for hiking," said Hudgins.

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Hudgins added that there are many activities to do while serving in Korea.

"For starters there's physical training. The 'post' on which we live, has terrific gyms and ball fields. Early morning is my sacred time, and I work out then fairly religiously. I am also studying Aikido three times a week. There are classes for that here, and for HapKido and Tae Kwan Do," Hudgins said.

## **Preparing for Overseas Duty**

With a little bit of planning, overseas duty can be an exciting adventure for both the Sailor and his or her family.

The first stop on the Internet for locating information on an overseas duty station is the Standard Installation Topic Exchange Service (SITES) website. SITES is the official DoD website to assist military members and their families with all the details connected with a government ordered Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move. This valuable tool has information on every duty station worldwide and can be found at: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/sites/index.jsp>. SITES provides important information such as housing availability, rules and regulations for that area, job opportunities, and more. Each listing also links to that command's official website.

Overseas duty brings challenging changes for both Sailors and their families. Both must undergo special screening to make



*Known as the symbol of the country's capital, Seoul Tower, with its unique revolving restaurant, illuminates the night in the Republic of Korea. One quarter of the nation's population lives in Seoul. Official U.S. Navy Photo.*

families, the government food supplemental program Women, Infants and Children (WIC) was made available to families serving overseas in the year 2000. One Yongsan Garrison, for example, WIC is available at the Eighteenth Medical Command.

With all these services made available Navy personnel currently stationed in Korea feel anything but limited.

Sailors like, Gunner's Mate 1st Class Anne Leonard, the staff armor and small arms instructor attached to CNFK Headquarters on Yongsan Garrison, Seoul, has also really enjoyed her tour in Korea and has found it to be a rewarding experience.

"This has been a great opportunity for me to live in another country. This tour has really opened my eyes to another culture," said Leonard. "I would have never seen Korea if it weren't for the military. I would gladly take another overseas tour just for an opportunity similar to this one."

While serving in Korea, Leonard has also enjoyed the opportunity of working closely with other branches of services, to include her U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marines, U.S. Army and ROK counterparts.

"Being stationed here is a unique experience for a Sailor, and I have enjoyed interacting with the other services here," Leonard said.

Korea is a beneficial overseas assignment that also requires some preparation. The Navy Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) office can help families prepare for that through a new, interactive CD. The CD contains information on quality of life resources and contains links to websites that contain valuable information on travel, culture, and other topics.

An overseas assignment may also offer the chance to earn additional money through Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP). As of January 2006, AIP is authorized for some assignments in Korea. Other monetary or travel benefits are also available, such as the Overseas Tour Incentives Program (OTEIP).



*IS2 (SW/AW) Teena Acree plays "Scissors - Rock - Paper" (pronounced "Kawi - Pawi - Bo" in Korean) with a young girl during a birthday party sponsored by Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea at the Hye Shim Orphanage in Seoul. Photo by Lt. j.g. Jessica Gandy.*

sure they are medically, financially and otherwise prepared. For more information on overseas screening procedures, go to: [http://buperscd.technology.navy.mil/bup\\_updt/508/milpers/1300-304.htm](http://buperscd.technology.navy.mil/bup_updt/508/milpers/1300-304.htm).

## **Available services at Overseas Assignments**

Some Sailors may fear that going overseas will limit their access to vital services they have come to depend upon such as Housing, Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSC), Army Community Service Centers, commissaries and exchanges. The truth is that these and other services are even more important in overseas locations. For example, in an effort to help low-income military



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Also, upon completion of duty in Korea, you are guaranteed follow on assignment to the coast of your choice if a valid billet exists per Naval Military Personnel Manual (MILPERSMAN) 1306-250.

For example, Seoul-area Overseas Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) ranges from approximately 306 dollars per month for an E-4 with three years of service to 1,643 dollars per month for an O-5 with 14 years of service and three dependents. The COLA ranges can vary every fifteen days with the exchange rate here.

If you have any questions regarding pay issues and entitlements while serving overseas, visit the Personal Support Facility Pacific website at <http://www.psapac.navy.mil/> for additional information.

You can also earn the Navy and Marine Corps Overseas Service Ribbon for 12 or more months of duty, have access to free space-available travel all over the world on military aircraft and get the chance to experience once-in-a-lifetime cultural activities as you live the life of a resident in your overseas location, instead of just being a tourist for a few days. The Korean Service Defense Medal is awarded to servicemembers after being stationed on the peninsula for thirty days.

Besides the financial rewards and cultural opportunities, overseas locations offer Sailors a chance to send their children to highly-rated Department of Defense (DoDDs) schools. All DoDDs schools are accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement and offer many advantages over stateside schools.



*Shoppers look and bargain for the best deals in the many traditional Korean markets all across the peninsula in the Republic of Korea. Photo by IS2 Leon Chi.*

Most of the schools within ROK are among the highest ranking in the DoDDs school system.

Capt. Bob Little, the logistics officer at CNFK headquarters, has a son who attends the second grade at a DoDDs school and is happy with the school his child attends.

"I like the proximity of the school from where I live and the good-natured personalities of the facility members. Most of all, I am very satisfied with the education my child is receiving," Little said."

Talk to your Command Career Counselor or detailer for more information on the above programs.

## Available locations

The Navy has billets in many places in Korea, including Osan, Pohang, Pyongtaek, Yongsan and Chinhae. Contact your detailer to find out what billets are open to you. For more information on serving in Korea, go to: <http://www.cnfk.navy.mil> and look for us on Navy Knowledge Online. Just put "Korea" into the search box for public communities and find out more about life in Korea!

Overseas duty can be both a challenging and rewarding experience. Whether you are looking to broaden your cultural horizons, experience life in a foreign country or an opportunity to travel, duty in Korea affords you that chance. Seize the moment. It is your *Passport to the rest of the Pacific*. It's a rewarding experience that you will look upon fondly when your assignment ends. Contact your Command Career Counselor or detailer for more information, or check out the SITES website listed above.



*Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea Transportation Specialist, Equipment Operator 1st Class Kathryn Remm, enjoyed spending time with local third grade Korean children at the USO's Good Neighbor Program community relations event. She was surprised at how much energy they had. Photo by IS2 Leon Chi.*